

## **Compulsive Exercisers/Athletes, Eating Disorders and Sports Nutrition**

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### **Typical Characteristics of Compulsive Athletes**

- Drive for perfection
  - Expect themselves to maintain perfect training scheduling, perfect weight
  - Constantly push themselves to live up to demanding expectations
  - Lack healthy perspective on food, weight, exercise
- Inordinate need for control
  - Rigid rules around exercise
  - Monitoring weight daily
  - Restricting fatty foods
- Compulsions that co-exist with over-exercise
  - Over-working-Skipped meals attributed to “demanding schedule” may be effort to control weight
  - Compulsive eating in response to work-related stress
    - Can lead to exhaustive exercise in effort to burn off binge-calories and control weight
    - Work, food, and exercise abuse becomes vicious cycle
- Assume too much responsibility both at work and at home
  - Tend to take care of everyone but themselves
  - Have trouble saying “no”
- Feel inadequate
  - Relentlessly push themselves to be better
  - Train harder, diet harder, work harder
- Difficulties having fun
- Trouble with close relationships
  - Many compulsive athletes feel awkward in groups
  - Opt for solitary activities such as working, exercising, eating

### **What can help?**

- Guidance from both a sports nutritionist and a mental health professional
- Efforts to forge better balance between food, weight, exercise

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